

Institute Examining Effects of Shale Gas Extraction and Climate Change on Drinking Water

Washington, DC -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced he has restored \$6.5 million for the Water Resources Research Act, which funds the New York State Water Resources Institute (WRI) at Cornell University. The administration's Fiscal Year 2012 budget eliminated funding for the Water Research Act, which provides funding to the program at Cornell. Hinchey used his position on the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee to have the funding restored in the Fiscal Year 2012 Interior appropriations bill. The WRI is currently studying how New York's water resources can be affected by shale gas extraction and global climate change. The Institute also works to assess the importance of water resources to local economies in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Program.

"The work being done at Cornell's Water Resources Institute is critical to our understanding of how gas drilling and climate change can affect our drinking water supplies," said Hinchey. "Unfortunately, this program was slated to be eliminated. As a member of the subcommittee, which oversees the funding for the program, I insisted that it not be cut. As a result, this program's funding will be maintained and the millions who rely on New York's water resources will benefit from the continued work at the institute."

"I would like to thank Congressman Hinchey for working to secure continued funding of the Water Resources Research Act," said Susan J. Riha, Director of the New York State Water Resources Institute. "This program helps ensure that the decisions we make about drinking water are made based on the best available science. As a result of his efforts, Water Resources Institutes in every state across the country will continue to provide critical research data and outreach to policy makers and regulatory agencies at every level of government."

The Institute's mission is to increase awareness of emerging water resources issues and to identify ways to improve the management of water resources in New York State and beyond. The Water Resources Institute acts as a bridge to foster communication and knowledge exchange between the various stakeholder groups, government agencies, and research institutions that are engaged with water resources management in New York State. In addition, the WRI has developed strong working relationships with federal agencies such as the United States Geological Survey, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The FY 2012 Interior Appropriations bill, which includes funding for the WRI program, now moves to the full Appropriations Committee for a vote.